



Julia Phillips, author of the Miranda, Queen of Argyll novels, is also part of Flying Pen Press' latest anthology [Space Sirens: Full Throttle Space Tales #2](#). We're pleased to present this interview with Julia about her fiction and her writing, and hope you'll enjoy it as much as we have!

How did you get involved with [Space Sirens](#)?

David Boop, another writer for Flying Pen, told me about the anthology and kept kind of pushing that should I should work on a story. I don't usually write short stories; I enjoy the freedom of the novel structure because, quite frankly I talk too much. But I really wanted to challenge myself to come up with a short story that would convey what I wanted within the space limit.

What angle did you explore on the theme of a lead female sci-fi character in your story *Outpost 6*?

I always like the fish-out-of-water stories. They allow so much room for comedy and drama. This particular one was a bit like *Northern Exposure* meets *Firefly*. A doctor finds herself in a sort of 'old west' feeling town – a little wild and untamed, but with the basics

of structure. Being the doctor, she also has the chance to interact with almost everyone in town.

Where do you get your story ideas?

In general, they come pretty much out of the blue. I'm sure there is some initial structure in my head that I'm not aware of, but I usually hear a phrase or song and it just sets off an avalanche. I try to jot down notes while it's fresh and then start seeing what is useable and where the gaps are. The idea for *Outpost 6* came from an article in the San Francisco Gate about the discovery of a solar system in the old constellation Argo. I went back to the Greek myth to get the names for my cities, etc., and the story grew from that basic idea.

What do you see as some of the advantages of the short story format over longer fiction formats, such as novels?

The advantage I found is that it forces you to stay focused. A novel lets you wander with words and sometimes it brings up some really good points and character interaction, but sometimes it just wanders. The short story format forces an economy of words, keeping them down to mostly dialogue and descriptive prose, which is a creative challenge for me. I found that pacing was much easier to maintain with the word limit in place. There's a certain 'get to the point' attitude that really kept me on track.

Did you choose to write, or did writing choose you?

Writing definitely chose me. I used to write what I now know to be spec television scripts in my head as a way to kill time on the school bus, but I never considered it going any further than that. My degree is in biology and I was preparing for medical school. I stayed at school over the summer break between junior and senior year of college and began writing again as a way to kill time, but this time I tried putting it on paper. The more I wrote, the more I had left to write and several novels and screenplays are half finished on my computer. The first project I managed to make myself finish is my fantasy series *Miranda, Queen of Argyll*. Hopefully, the fount of inspiration will keep providing me with more projects.

What is the best writing advice you've ever received?

Write what you love. The process of writing is way too demanding already to let it become an arduous task. Let the stories come out that you would want to read yourself and inhabit the place with people you'd want to meet, or avoid in your antagonist.

What can readers expect from you next?

I am working on the third book in my series, which hope to have out by fall of 2009, and I am also working on screenplay adaptations for a couple of authors. I am almost always working on some project or other, so something will come out soon.

Born in Texas, Julia Phillips has lived in Longmont, Colorado for most of her life. As an only child, her parents took great care with her education, both inside and outside the classroom. Her dad worked rotating shifts, so every once in a while; they would take Julia out of school for the day and do a private field trip. These trips could range anywhere from going down to the National Western Stock Show in Denver or out to the movie set for "Centennial." The places didn't matter as much as the experiences, and they were always full and fun.

While the B.S. in Biology she received isn't doing her as much good as she planned, the research skills she learned have come in handy for her current projects, especially medieval history and world mythology.

The second book in her series, *Miranda, Queen of Argyll: Unlikely Saints*, was published in September, answering the cliff-hanger ending of her first novel, *Miranda, Queen of Argyll: Past Sins*. Both books show that history will haunt you, gnomes can be funny, friends always have your back, and life can still surprise you, whether you're immortal or not.

Something in the rarified air up here has her already working on her next projects, including a couple of screenplays, an anthology piece and the beginning of *Miranda III*. She also plans on releasing e-book versions of her series soon. Until then, she'll be busy with projects, including screenplays and television scripts, with her most tolerant supporter nearby, her cat Seuss.

You can visit Julia Phillips' website www.queenofargyll.com. Thank you again for a great interview!

Flying Pen Press' website is at FlyingPenPress.com.